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cc Druek # 98-67
and
CC 90-571

Mike Isenberg
Massachusetts Department of Telecommunications and Energy
Telecommunications Division
One South Station
Boston MA 02110

FROM:
LORIE BELL
AMHERST, MA
re: TNS-STS

Dear Mr. Isenberg:

PROVIDING SPEECH TO SPEECH

I live in Massachusetts and I urge Vista to make telephones accessible to more people with speech disabilities by establishing Speech to Speech and an effective STS outreach service. I urge your company to comply with FCC Regulations and provide STS in Massachusetts by March 2001.

In California, people with speech disabilities have dramatically improved their lives because of STS. One example is Dr. Robert Aber who experienced great growth in his psychology practice once he was able to communicate with clients over STS. Writer Pam Hoyer advanced her writing career substantially using STS to gather facts for articles. Dr Bob Segalman became successful as a social activist helping people with speech disabilities once he began using STS. STS potentially answers the telecommunications needs of thousands of people.

PROVIDING STS OUTREACH

In addition to providing STS itself, providing outreach appropriate to people with speech disabilities is an essential part of access. When people with speech disabilities have appropriate training to use STS, they become more independent, participate more in the community, get jobs etc. The new relay regulations require states and relay providers to contract such that relay is accessible to users with speech disabilities.

If Vista provides STS without appropriate outreach, call volumes will be extremely low. Call volumes could rise substantially with an extensive STS outreach service tailored to people with speech disabilities. Failure to provide appropriate outreach for STS means Massachusetts residents with speech disabilities will not enter the mainstream of life.

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Because I want this independence for people with speech disabilities in Massachusetts, I strongly urge you to provide an STS outreach service similar to the very successful STS intensive outreach services in California, Minnesota and Maryland.

FUNDING STS OUTREACH

Based on Minnesota's budgetary experience, such a service may cost \$150,000 annually because of Massachusetts's population.. Many states have sufficient surcharge money to fund a STS outreach service without difficulty. Vocational rehabilitation client services money may be available to teach people to use STS as it fosters independence and makes people job ready.

CONCLUSION

A large proportion of people with speech disabilities have other disabilities as well; this makes it very difficult for them to advocate for themselves. Therefore, it is necessary for the rest of us to insure that services like STS outreach are adequately provided for.

Again, I strongly urge you to budget for an effective STS outreach service with an annual budget of \$150,000.

Sincerely,

SIGNATURE: *Rorie a. Bell*

ADDRESS: *99 Southpoint Dr, apt A*

CITY, STATE, ZIP: *Amherst, ma 01002*

DATE: *January 3, 2001*

✓ cc: Disability Rights Office
Consumer Information Bureau

Federal Communications Commission, Room 6C-447
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

cc Marilyn L. Benoit
Relay Administrator
Bell Atlantic
280 Locke Drive, Room A401
Marlboro, MA 01752

cc: Rita Beier, Director
Outreach and Quality Assurance
VISTA, Massachusetts Relay
489 Whitney Ave, #100
Holyoke, MA 01040
V

cc: Bob Segalman, Ph.D.
Department of Rehabilitation
Att: Program Evaluation
2000 Evergreen Street
Sacramento, CA 95815



Lorie Ann Bell
59 Southpoint Dr., Apt. A
Amherst, MA 01002



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